

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL, SUNDAY, JULY 27, TITLED "SYMBOLIC JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE".
2. LIKE MOST SUCH JOURNEYS OF HEADS OF STATE, PRESIDENT FORD'S FORTHCOMING TRIP TO FINLAND TO SIGN THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AGREEMENT AND THEN TO THREE NATIONS OF EASTERN EUROPE IS A SYMBOLIC RATHER THAN A SUBSTANTIVE MISSION.
3. INCREASINGLY ANGRY CONTROVERSY BECLOUDS THIS TRIP, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF SHARP DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND ITS CRITICS AS TO WHAT THE PRECISE SYMBOLISM IS AND WHETHER THIS COUNTRY AND ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES WILL PROFIT MORE, OR LESS, FROM IT THAN OUR SOVIET ADVERSARIES. THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE SEE THESE EVENTS AS USEFULLY FURTHERING US-SOVIET DETENTE. THEIR CRITICS, INCLUDING OPPOSITION
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DEMOCRATS, CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICANS, AND MANY INDEPENDENTS SUCH AS OURSELVES VIEW THIS DEVELOPMENT AS A REGRETTABLE, UNILATERAL GAIN FOR THE SOVIET UNION WITHOUT ANY CORRESPONDING ADVANTAGE FOR THE UNITED STATES.

4. IN A STATEMENT ISSUED LAST WEEK, PRESIDENT FORD TRIED TO COUNTER THE CRITICISM BUT DID NOT ENTIRELY SUCCEED. REGARDING THE SECURITY AGREEMENT, MR. FORD SAID: "WE ARE NOT COMMITTING OURSELVES TO ANYTHING BEYOND WHAT WE ARE ALREADY COMMITTED TO BY OUR OWN MORAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS AND BY MORE FORMAL TREATY AGREEMENTS SUCH AS THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER AND DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS."

5. IT IS UNQUESTIONABLY TRUE THAT BY ITS COMMITMENTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AND BY ITS DEMONSTRATED PRACTICE IN SEVERAL CRISES, THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT INTEND TO ALTER THE SOVIET DOMINATION OF EASTERN EUROPE EXCEPT INsofar AS IT CAN DO SO BY PEACEFUL MEANS. THE UNITED STATES AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II REGRETTED BUT DID NOT TRY TO PREVENT MILITARILY THE SOVIET UNION'S ANNEXATION OF THE BALTIC STATES AND OF TERRITORIES FORMERLY BELONGING TO GERMANY, POLAND, RUMANIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THIS COUNTRY ALSO REFUSED TO INTERVENE WHEN THE SOVIET UNION BY MILITARY FORCE CRUSHED THE EAST BERLIN RIOTS OF 1953, THE HUNGARIAN REBELLION OF 1956, AND THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN MOVE TOWARD LIBERALIZATION IN 1968. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS HISTORY, MR. FORD IS CORRECT THAT THE AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED IN HELSINKI ALTERS NOTHING OF SUBSTANCE IN UNITED STATES POLICY.

6. WHERE THE ADMINISTRATION AND ITS CRITICS DISAGREE, HOWEVER, IS IN THEIR ASSESSMENT OF WHAT THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT PORTENDS FOR THE FUTURE. MR. FORD SAYS THAT HE SEES THE AGREEMENT AS HELPING TO OPEN EASTERN EUROPE FOR EASIER TRAVEL AND BETTER JOURNALISTIC ACCESS; HE ALSO SEES IT AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE ACCORD ON THE STATUS OF WEST BERLIN AND A MOVE FORWARD TOWARD POSSIBLE AGREEMENT ON THE MUTUAL BALANCED REDUCTION OF FORCES.

7. HIS CRITICS NOT ONLY MINIMIZE THESE GAINS AS TRIVIAL
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AND THESE HOPES AS CHIMERICAL BUT THEY ALSO WORRY MUCH MORE ABOUT THE USEFULNESS OF THE AGREEMENT--AND OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT OF IT--TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN ITS UNCEASING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN TO DEADEN RESISTANCE TO ITS DOMINATION OF EASTERN EUROPE AND TO SOFTEN UP THE WILL TO RESIST OF THE NATO COUNTRIES.

8. THE UNEASINESS ABOUT SOVIET POLITICAL INTENTIONS IS HEIGHTENED BY RECENT AND PROSPECTIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN AND WESTERN EUROPE. PORTUGAL HAS MADE A RAPID TRANSITION FROM ANTI-COMMUNIST NATO MEMBER TO MILITARY

DICTATORSHIP SIGNIFICANTLY RESPONSIVE TO COMMUNIST INFLUENCE. RECENT ELECTIONS IN ITALY HAVE ERODED THE STRENGTH OF THE PRO-WESTERN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND ENHANCED THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

9. IN THE NEAR FUTURE, TWO AGED DICTATORS--MARSHAL TITO IN YUGOSLAVIA AND GENERAL FRANCO IN SPAIN--CAN BE EXPECTED TO PASS FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE. WILL THE SOVIET UNION MAKE A MAXIMUM EFFORT AFTER TITO'S DEPARTURE TO RESTORE YUGOSLAVIA TO FULL ADHERENCE TO THE EASTERN BLOC? AFTER FRANCO LEAVES, WILL THE SPANISH COMMUNISTS BE AS SUCCESSFUL AS THEIR PORTUGUESE COUNTER-PARTS IN EXTENDING SOVIET INFLUENCE ON THE IBERIAN PENINSULA?

10. SUCH DEVELOPMENTS, ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL, FORM THE BACKGROUND OF THE DISQUIET THAT MR. FORD'S NEXT JOURNEY HAS AROUSED. THE COMMUNISTS ARE MAKING GAINS IN THE WEST, WHILE THE WEST IS MAKING NO COMPARABLE INROADS IN THE EASTERN BLOC.

11. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE IF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ADVISERS HAD NOT COMMITTED HIM TO UNDERTAKING THIS TRIP, WHICH IT IS NOW TOO LATE TO CANCEL. THE RISKS OF A SYMBOLIC SETBACK CAN BE OFFSET, HOWEVER, IF THE UNITED STATES IN THE MONTHS AHEAD MAKES SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS IN STRENGTHENING ITS ALLIES IN THE WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND IN RESOLVING THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ISSUES THAT DIVIDE THEM FROM THIS COUNTRY. ACTING IN UNCLASSIFIED

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CONCERT, THE FREE NATIONS HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY CAN MEET CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES WITH COHERENT AND VIABLE POLICIES. INGERSOLL

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